

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date 7/6/71

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On July 1, 1971, at 11:00 a.m., Dr. DANIEL ELLSBERG held a press conference at the Sheraton Commander Hotel, 16 Garden Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts. During this press conference the following dialogue took place as Dr. ELLSBERG was asked questions by the various news reporters and television reporters who were present.

Dr. ELLSBERG stated:

"Let me take this time to say how much my wife and I really appreciate the way that the press took to heart my request that we have a couple days. It was very good and I know that it created difficulties for you and I appreciate it.

"Question (Q): Dr. ELLSBERG, I wonder if you could tell us something about the mechanics by which the documents reached the newspapers, and what your part was in it?

"Answer (A): My part was that I took along with the newspapers the responsibility incidentally I am not going to make a statement. I stayed away from the press for several weeks as I guess you know and I am here to answer your questions now. Now, if your questions suggest some comments that I might want to make later on, I may do that but I am open to all questions now. On this first question, the press and I, I guess at this point, share the responsibility for the decision to bring this news, this information in history, to the American public. I couldn't have done it by myself, obviously, the press had to have the material available so they could make that decision for themselves and each paper had to make it for himself, themselves. I do feel rather strongly that the importance of what happened is the issue issue of--the

On 7/1/71 at Cambridge, Massachusetts File # Boston 65-5236

by [REDACTED] - 5 - Date dictated 7/2/71

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"issues that are presented by the documents themselves. I felt for a couple of years, since I had full access to those documents and had the chance to read them for myself that the public was not well-served by relying on me or any other dozen experts to analyze that material and give our analysis and recommendations in secret to the Executive Branch. That it was just essential that it be available to the citizens of this country, to learn from, to understand and to make their decisions as citizens. And I include in those citizens their public servants and I mean by that the four branches of government. The press, which has performed very well and seems to me earned its reputation as the fourth branch of the government, the courts that I think have enormous need to have access to this material and have had to some extent for the past couple of months, very much the Congress, and the Executive Branch of the Government; that was my concern. I really am anxious not to divert attention at this time from the content of those papers and I know better than anyone else, better than anyone else, how hard it is to get any citizen in this country to sit down and read through those memos.

"Q: Dr. ELLSBERG, could you be more specific?

"A: Sir, that's what I hope will be happening.

"Q: You have not answered the question, would you answer my question please?

"A: As a matter of fact, on the mechanics.....
No, I don't think I will.

"Q: Dr. ELLSBERG, Senator BARRY GOLDWATER says you should be tried for espionage, we realize we don't want attention focused on you but it is now. Would you respond to the impact of the Supreme Court decision as it regards your case?--As it applies to you?

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"A: I don't understand the legality, the technicalities of my own case. I am not a lawyer nor do I understand the technicalities of some of those Supreme Court opinions. I understand the decision and as a citizen I am delighted by the decision that their judgement was that the American people should have this information; I can only be delighted by it. And I am also delighted, by the way, that those Supreme Court Justices had the opportunity to read that material and I hope each of them reads every one of the 7,000 pages. I think this whole country will be better off for it if they do, but I am very glad; that would apply whatever decision is made - I am very glad that they made the decision that the American people will have the opportunity and I hope people will use the opportunity.

"Q: Why do you suppose that the other members of the team that prepared the statement didn't take the same action that you did?

"A: I certainly understand how they feel; their background is my background. The moral choice that is involved in something like this, and I say that not to dramatize it but just to state that it is a grave choice; is one that each person who has had access to these--this material and to these cables which go back 25 years and memos which go back 25 years. Each person who had had knowledge of that, had, in effect, faced the choice day by day over those 25 years as to whether the secrecy regulations of the Department of Defense which I know very well -- and I have been a professional for the past 12 years, should override the day last month and next month, the need and the right of the public to have that kind of information and on no one of those days would that would not be an easy task and I know that. I can't answer for having made the choice, it is obvious that they made the choice in their own mind in favor of secrecy. I reached the point where I no longer could judge it that way.

"Q: At the time.....immediately after President KENNEDY's assassination (couldn't be heard)

"A: My knowledge of that would be based on a reading of the studies. There is a study on the plan for the phased withdrawal of American troops plans that were devised under the Department of Defense direction between '62 and '64. I'm not sure whether that that particular study had come out. I think when it does come out it will answer some of the questions in people's minds as to what seems peculiar projections in 1963 as you may remember when Secretary of Defense MC NAMARA and TAYLOR said that we would perhaps phase out all our troops in '65. I think it would not use our time right for me to summarize the study for you as I say, I hope and expect that that study, along with all the others will be out, page by page and you will be able to read that and answer those questions for yourself. On the specific question raised, the study does not concern that phase out.

"Q: There is apparently a choice as to whether you make your Court appearance here in Boston or in Los Angeles. What choice do you have? Does it matter to you?

"A: That is not the kind of issue that I know anything about and the choice is not mine or my lawyers.

"Q: Dr. ELLSBERG, was there any material, documents so sensitive that you did not release it.....are there still secret documents that you saw during your study that are so sensitive you did not divulge?

"A: There were in fact several volumes dealing with negotiations, they were past negotiations but that they obviously involved the possibility of channels, private channels, that could be used in the future, ah, I was saying that I did not think that that was not an absolute overbidding

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problem inasmuch as we had not used those private channels very effectively, I would have to say in the past, and we do have private channels now. Nevertheless, I did not want to contribute to even the possibility that I would get in the way of negotiations like that, therefore, I did exercise the judgement of giving those materials to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee which I felt had quite an overriding need to know and not to any newspapers.

"Q: Dr. ELLSBERG, one of the biggest criticisms of the report that has been printed has been that it is too lopsided. Dr. ROSTOW in his criticism said that he'd flunk a history student who would use this kind of research to arrive at the conclusions that are in the report; that many of the principals were left out in the interviews, in other words, the report is full of holes. What do you say to this?

"A: I am not going to comment on individuals and therefore I'll not comment on whether a history student of Dr. ROSTOW's could expect to get a more comprehensive picture than is in those 7,000 pages, but, I do agree with him that it is an incomplete report. I thought that the New York Times expressed very well the limitations and I was glad to see them do it in their first issue, and not to make any false claims. There are many limitations of the study--it's a beginning, it's a beginning of history and it's a beginning of honest history. Now, on the question of interpretations, those definitely reflect the backgrounds, the points of view of the analyst who wrote it and to my mind, very creditable work that reflects very creditably both on the people who wrote them, on the freedom and objectivity that was encouraged by Dr. LESLIE GELB who organized the study, and I think did a magnificent job and on the freedom that was given by Secretary of Defense MC NAMARA who not only called for this study at a jeopardy which every official understands very well and he was the only one likely to take that decision, and he was the only one who did take that decision, to call for such a study. He asked for an objective study and it's my personal knowledge that no guidelines whatever were put down in the exercise of judgement

by these responsible analysts, many of whom had some degree, considerable degree of experience, but again I think it of crucial importance that the documents be available. The analyses, good as they are in my opinion, are limited both by the limitations of the study, the lack of interviews, the lack of a lot of other documentation and the backgrounds of the analysts themselves, including my own. It's the documents, from which historians can start and it's the documents that I hope the public will read, boring and often painful as they are, because the time has come for the public to form it's own opinion and has the opportunity and it can only do that by reading those words of the public servants themselves and making their own decision as to how well they have been served, and how they want to be served in the future, which is after all the real problem.

"Q: Dr. ELLSBERG, to follow that up, what other studies, what other materials, do you think would be important to help the public get a fuller understanding of the origins of U.S. involvement in Vietnam and why we are still in Vietnam?

"A: If WALT ROSTOW has a personal file of studies and memos which have not been released in this study, I believe it would be an excellent service to the public that he should now present it in full, and it might well be that his own roll will appear wiser and more thoughtful than it does in the studies. I would say the same for every former official of this government who may have his own file of documents. I think it would be a very responsible and useful act if they were to complement this incomplete set of studies with what they may be able to provide.

"Q: Would you reply to Judge _____ charge that the studies may do such damage as to kill more people, hurt negotiations, ah---

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"A: I released these studies because I felt that the concealment of this information for 25 years has now led to the deaths of 50,000 Americans and several hundreds thousands of Vietnamese in the last few years -- a couple of million over the 20 years of this involvement and I think that the odds have been weighted in favor of secrecy----- judgements at this point of whether the American public is to be trusted to make these decisions vs. the U.S. Executive Branch can now be judged by you and by citizens and by the courts and by the Congress in the light of where secrecy had led us over the last 25 years.

SIDNEY
ZION "Q: Would you have disclosed your part in this if
ZION'S had not spoken out?

"A: Oh, absolutely.

"Q: When? Did you plan to at that time?

ZION "A: The only thing, actually, that led me to be so unavailable over that period actually had nothing to do with ZIONS. I had taken steps to make myself temporarily unavailable a day before I heard of ZIONS revelations -- it's related in fact to actions of the administrations to censor this material and the possibility that that might be successful at that point a decision that I made some 2 years ago that this information should be available to Congress and the public called on me to get to work and to take some further action to make sure that it was available to the press and to the public. I stayed unavailable as long as that work needed to be done. I needed privacy for it and I made myself available to the warrant, and in fact, as soon as I felt content that this material would get out.

"Q: Is it because you are under a Federal Grand Jury indictment that you do not want to tell us how this was done?

"A: It's not for that reason.

"Q: What is the reason?

"A: In answer to the comment that I had here earlier, I am perfectly well aware, that's why I'm here today, that the act that I took was a political act, hence a public act; the public had, I think, a right to know, who I was, what my something of what I thought, why I did it, in other words, although I think that individual privacy is a very different matter from the privacy of the Executive Departments lying to the public, I don't claim rights to privacy for myself at this time. It would be too bad if I did. But, my answer to your questions is that I'm not going to make the decision for other individuals. What happens to their privacy, they are absolutely free to make that decision for themselves. I am not going to make it for them.

"Q: Magistrate PRINCI said at your court appearance the other day these papers belong to the people of the U.S. not to you as a private citizen. What is your reaction to that statement?

"A: He didn't quite say that, he made a very interesting statement, he said these papers are not the property of any man, they belong to the people and one of my lawyers, CHARLES NESSON got up and said, 'Your Honor, that is the essence of this case.'

"Q: Dr. ELLSBERG, you have said that you have given these documents to the press, did you give them to the New York Times?

"A: I am not going to name any individual papers, I gave them to the papers of this country.

"Q: That includes the New York Times then?

"A: It is for the New York Times to decide how far they want to go in concealing their sources, and they have done a service to this country by defending that in front of the Supreme Court, and I'm not going to decide that for them.

"Q: Dr. ELLSBERG, without telling us the newspapers involved can you tell us did you along deliver the documents to the newspapers, and I'm talking about newspaper editors and reporters-----

"A: It is implicit in what I said, I think, that other individuals helped out in various ways (pause) had to. I'm not going to name them and I'm not going to talk about details, that would, as I say, make the decision for them.---- what happens to their code of honor.

"Q: Dr. ELLSBERG, you said the decision was a political decision, but what of a moral decision? Would you say something about the base of the moral decision? Do you think it was more moral to reveal what was said than to keep secrecy? Would you say something about the base of that?

"A: As I had ----- I can perhaps respond a little more to the question that was raised earlier---did I make decisions with respect to these documents? No, I dealt with material of the highest order of secrecy for some 12 years. These are not matters--what the effect of various disclosures in public are not matters which professionals are qualified to make. But, for what it is worth, I am a professional. It was my judgement that not one page of the 7,000 pages that were released could meet the standards that have been quoted in the newspapers, could be of grave damage to the national security; obviously if I had thought differently I would not have revealed that particular page. It's my impression, but then again I'm not entirely up on the case, that the government did not make a convincing case to either Judges GURFEIN or GESSELL's ruling on this, that they could not find a single page of the 7,000 pages that, in fact, did meet those criteria. I'm glad that that particular judgement was confirmed as I read it, but nevertheless, certainly I could be wrong, it's inflicted in everything I have been saying that I have been wrong a lot in the past and to be wrong in a case like this is to be very gravely wrong. I agree with everyone who said that; that's why I felt it was important that the public know who was responsible and I was determined that I would take public responsibility.

"Q: Dr. ELLSBERG, you said you took yourself out of circulation that you did not make yourself available, were you not in fact staying with colleague in San Diego during the period that you were not around here?

"A: I'll answer that question, no.

"Q: Were you the source of the documents published in all of the newspapers or just some of them?

"A: To my knowledge, all of them. Now, if some other people were getting in on the act, that's fine -- I'm not aware of it.

"Q: Dr. ELLSBERG, were there any newspapers that turned down the documents? Did you ever offer them to a newspaper that would not accept them?

"A: No, that's an interesting question. I don't think there was.

"Q: What about a magazine? Did magazines turn you down?

"A: Well, if you regard the Christian Science Monitor and the Washington Post as anti-war newspapers, I must say I exercised certain personal tastes. I was anxious to give it to newspapers that I though had told me truth in the past, and I thought that they ought to have the chance to make this decision now.

"Q: Dr. ELLSBERG, did you make the phone calls to the newspapers? Dr. ELLSBERG, did you make those phone calls?

"A: No, I in fact did not make all the phone calls to newspapers for reasons that I don't know.

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"Q: Dr. ELISBERG, there's been a great deal of comment about your change of heart regarding the war and some people suggest that you feel guilty about your earlier roll. Would you address yourself to that?

"A: If I feel guilty about my earlier roll and I do to some degree, it's based upon some rather high standards that I've come to hold for public officials, higher than I had at the time. It's, you might say, it's a feeling that I wished I had felt guilty, that I was concealing this information before. But, for actions that I took I had plenty of reasons to think that I was doing good things for this country and good things for the people. I was trying to make, ah to reduce civilian casualties in Vietnam, trying to improve the effectiveness of our approach and I told myself, ah, it good that an official, like me, whose critical, let's say, of the bombing, which I felt to be in a number of ways, critical of various abuses to have access, to have his voice heard. And if the price I have to pay is to ignore Constitutional questions of Congress's right to know and the public's right to know in order to improve my service to that other branch of government, the Executive Branch, I'll pay that price. And, that's really the main answer I think, to when somebody asked earlier, what about the officials who didn't reveal it. They certainly had good reasons I think, they could point to - I must say that I come to the feeling in the end, I have come, especially after I read the study which they hadn't read in the whole in the end. But those reasons had never been good enough. They'd been wrong and the public and I should have demanded; I should have demanded more of myself, the public should demand more of its officials, the notion that ignorance is not an excuse because they determine their own ignorance and the idea that the big Bureaucratic machine bears all the responsibilities is not the excuse, because the records shows that that machine has responded to the highest elected officials of this land in four administrations and I would say five very effectively, so none of those were excuses. I find myself without those excuses. Ultimately the problem that compelled me is not feelings of guilt

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but feelings of responsibility. I had access to this knowledge, I had the opportunity to make it public, at jeopardy to myself, but that jeopardy is small compared to the jeopardy that we're asking, that we have asked of 3,000,000 men we sent to Vietnam during combat. I had that opportunity, then, to make it available and I couldn't find any excuses for myself not to.

"Q: Dr. ELLSBERG, in your thesis that the escalation (cannot hear) there are a lot of serious miscalculations on the part of Presidential advisors which somewhat counteracts your thesis. Could you respond to that?

"A: Could you be specific?

"Q: Well, BUNDY saying that the bombings would be successful.--Things of that nature, that sort.

"A: After reading the documents and I invite you to check this judgement, after reading the documents, I came to feel that there were a number of evasions a number of reasons, explanations given for our involvement (cannot hear) that looked critical that the mistake or inattention and he didn't watch closely enough; we heard the KENNEDY advisors, the officials whom we relied on up to now for our knowledge of the documents of the KENNEDY Administration, tell us that the President had many other things on his mind which is not a complimentary conclusion, right? However, we read the documents, and we find un wisdom, to be sure, we find ignorance, we find arrogance, you do find some lack of control but none of this seems to explain decisions, because the decisions seem to have been made year after year in the light of what was adequate information to make better decisions and that presents you with a paradox which the studies themselves don't fully answer. I have come to my own theory, through speculations as to what the motives were, but the facts are that the President was told in his intelligence estimates, very well over the years, in fact the intelligence information in the 50's which was somewhat better than in the 60's are quite a startling set of documents. I am not quite sure how many of them have come out, in documents yet, but I

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"would invite you all to look at that sequence of intelligence estimates from 1950 on. The CIA will not suffer in its reputation for estimating to have those published, but that presents a different kind of paradox then. If the President had this information available, why did he ignore it? Why did he listen to WALT ROSTOW and MC GEORGE BUNDY as experts on Vietnam, instead of people who in fact, could, it would seem to have, a very good track record for prediction. I don't have a complete answer to that. They probably don't fully know themselves. They will understand that question **when** they read the sweep of estimates now and I hope that they are doing that.

"Q: Didn't you also author some of the memos calling for provocative action against North Vietnam?

"A: Oh, no, I did not.

"Q: Dr. ELLSBERG, to what extent do (can't hear)

"A: First of all I would say that the performance by the administration as seen over the last 2 weeks is almost an acting out dramatically, of all the attitudes that are revealed in these studies for the last 20 years, attitudes that the fact of our history are too damaging to know, and let me tell you they don't know it they don't read it do you think there is an official in the government who has read 7,000 pages or 1,000 pages of that study although it has been available to them. I'll tell you another technical factor from some professional background; top secret studies of history don't get read by officials because they obey the regulations and they don't take them home and read them at night and they sure don't read them during the day because they've got many other things to do and the kind of things that they do during the day we can now read about. But, if you ask are these policies changing? What are you asking about specifically? The policy of kidding the public? The first day brought out a wealth of statements by several branches of the administration that they had never heard of the study. That was just a set of lies, no different from the lies of the past; it was just a reflex action.

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"Q: Can't hear, regarding President JOHNSON and his predecessors.

"A: As I see it from the outside, that seems quite evident. What made it seem urgent to me to get this history, this history out, at whatever jeopardy, at this point was precisely a perception as of the spring of '69 and that was frankly a disappointing perception for me that the officials of the NIXON Administration were subject to the same traps of arrogance and ignorance, the same feeling, now we're in and it will all go differently; we can do what those Democrats couldn't do, just as the Democrats told themselves over 20 years we can do what the French couldn't do. It was because I saw that developing that I came increasingly to feel that I want the Administration to read this history that was my own reflexis out of 12 years, tell the Boss first. You know, if you had my Marine Corps experience, I spend all my life outside of college working, well I would have said before for the government, but I have gotten more discriminating now, working for the Executive Branch of the Government; the branch to which Congress is the enemy as you all know and the public isn't part of it at all. And, ah, I worked for the President and certainly all my instincts were, you know the Czar must know about this, right? If he knew, he wouldn't do this and the then some time was spent being newly disillusioned on that score. Congress was my next consideration, I thought that, ah, they would want this information out. I won't go through that history, (ah) I do say and I say that I am grateful to what the press has done for the public that came after some long history; but I have gotten away from the question, I do think that in fact what I suspected and was told by officials within the Administration, who I trusted but could not reveal, that the policy was essentially the same, tactically different, in terms of reducing American man power but the same in terms of using military methods, now bombing, paying for a large army in the GVN of the Government of Vietnam and threatening very

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heavy bombing; that these military methods were still to be used to achieve much of the same end as the past, avoiding defeat or failure in Vietnam for the Administration which happens at this moment to be in office. I think that policy has not changed and when Cambodia occurred there was no doubt left in my mind, and when Son The came, the bombing that started out after that, the Laotian invasion came, statements of officials in the Administration that this would be the course of policy was now confirmed beyond any question in my mind, and if you ask do I feel guilty, as somebody asked earlier, how could I not but feel regret that the actions I had taken a year and a half earlier had not in fact been adequate to get this material out and now two more invasions have taken place. Do you realize that since the MC GOVERN-HATFIELD amendment was first voted on and first defeated by the Senate which thereby foreswore the responsibility for losing the war, just as the President like the four past Presidents has been willing to pay certain human prices to avoid being the first president to lose the war. Since that time 2800 Americans have died. I hope that Congress and the men who voted against the MC GOVERN-HATFIELD amendment in both houses have made that connection, but I've been in a way of thinking for the last couple of years that could not prevent me from making that connection and feeling that I felt that responsibility.

"Q: Can't be heard completely but concerns his thought on loyalty of employees to the Executive Branch of Government.

"A: The Executive Branch has received splendid loyalty in its administration from its officials over the last 25 years as the surprises in these studies makes quite clear. It's evident that the ability of this country to keep secrets has gotten too good for our good and the fact that we've been able so successfully to keep these secrets on the basis of what may be called loyalty over these years has meant that those officials did not serve the government as well as they served their boss. I will take one more question gentlemen.

10.

"Q: Cannot be heard however ELLSBERG asks that he be able to put the answer in two parts.

"A: Let me put that quickly into two parts. The documents, incomplete as they are, reveal facts about what was done, many of which, just in the form of action, and we're not talking about plans we're talking about men who were dropped into other countries and other men who died in certain ways. There's facts, about action, but there are also facts about opinion and facts about recommendations and all of those. Now, the studies are incomplete, it's enormously complex material there is a second question of what was the motive, what was going on all this time. Clearly the facts, are facts of a very consistent pattern of behavior but what explains the pattern of behavior that's not easy to answer. I personally do not feel that I have a really confident answer. Now to your question directly, Taking it in reverse order, I think the radical-----can I just say the radical critique has certain assumptions as to what the motivations were, on the other hand they've had certain assumptions as to what was going on, I think there can be no question, and I say this as somebody who was as a contemptuous of the radical press as any other member of the Executive Branch for many years and who cancelled subscriptions because these strident hysterical people did not know what was going on frankly, I think that if they reprint their old articles they will have less embarrassment in comparing them in terms of the facts as to what was going than any other part of the press that I know of and I think -----but furthermore on the question of explanation, that's starting now; we have some of the material, a lot of the material to start that real analysis and I think that no one - and let it take awhile - I hope that the radical press and the others will again do the effort now to go through the material. I'm by the way more confident that they'll do it than I am that my other parts will and I think, their - what they've been saying over the years-----the truth about what they have been saying about was happening means that their explanations deserve a very serious hearing from everybody.

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BS 65-5236
RJL:gms

B. Travel

The following investigation was conducted by [REDACTED]

On June 29, 1971, a review of DANIEL ELLSBERG's passport was conducted in the Office of the United States Magistrate, PETER W. PRINCI. ELLSBERG is the holder of United States Passport J901454. His date of birth was listed as April 7, 1931 in Illinois and he is described as 5' 10" with brown hair and blue eyes. His permanent address is listed as 20752 Pacific Coast Highway, Malibu, California. Passport was issued on August 12, 1968. The passport indicated that ELLSBERG arrived in London, England on September 18, 1968 and arrived in the United States at New York City on September 24, 1968.

A partially illegible entry dated December 28, 1970, contains the notation Rabat-Sale. Passport reflects that ELLSBERG then arrived in the United States in New York City on December 29, 1970.

Passport also contains a visa issued at the Embassy of Vietnam, Washington, D.C., on August 6, 1969. This visa number 1902 was due to expire three months following date of issue. This visa was valid for one visit to Vietnam not to exceed thirty days.

An additional entry in the passport indicated that ELLSBERG arrived at the Trinidad-Tobago Airport, British West Indies on March 23, 1971. It is also reflected that he arrived in the United States on March 29, 1971, at New York City.

BS 65-5236

C. Associates

On June 26, 1971

[REDACTED] that, although he is an associate of DANIEL ELLSBERG, he has had no contact with him for approximately two months and could give no indication of ELLSBERG's whereabouts. He advised that he does not socialize with the ELLSBERGs and could furnish no pertinent information concerning his activities.